



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 9 April 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

- Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)
- Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Timothy Gaston MLA
- Mr Harry Harvey MLA
- Mr Brian Kingston MLA
- Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Online:

- Ms Sínead McLaughlin
- Ms Claire Sugden MLA
- Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Ms Róisín Kelly (Assembly Clerk)

Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Deborah Madden (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

As below.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed Members that a note of the informal meeting between the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson and the First and deputy First Minister to discuss the legislative timeline for the Truth Recovery and Redress Bill was included in the Tabled Pack.

The Chairperson updated Members that the Clerk will work with officials over the coming weeks to identify a preparatory briefing paper on the key issues within the Bill in preparation for introduction which is anticipated in June 2025.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 April 2025.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Clerk's Brief - Truth Recovery Gender Perspectives

The Chairperson referred Members to a Clerk's Brief in relation to Truth Recovery Gender perspectives.

The Chairperson advised that the Head of Legal Services would be attending today's meeting to provide legal advice for the purpose of this agenda item.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session at 2.05pm to discuss this item of business further.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2.05pm.

The meeting moved into open session at 3.18pm.

Members discussed the way forward in terms of Truth Recovery Gender perspectives.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Co-Chairs of the Truth Recovery Panel to update them on its decision regarding the approach to addressing gender perspectives within the Truth Recovery process. The Clerk will also circulate the draft correspondence to Members prior to issuing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the newly appointed Chairperson of the Consultative Forum to enquire about the preparations being undertaken to support individuals who will be affected by the forthcoming Truth Recovery and Redress Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to advise that the Committee will be corresponding periodically regarding complaints received by TEO, in particular in relation to the truth recovery process, and to request information on the actions the Department intends to take to address these complaints.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should compile an aide-memoire outlining the complaints process, to be provided to stakeholders raising issues to Members of the Committee. A copy will be sent to Members.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the women who previously attended its meeting on the 29 January regarding Truth Recovery Gender Perspectives, to update them on the steps taken by the Committee to address gender perspectives within the Truth Recovery process.

5.2 HIA and Redress in the Republic of Ireland

The Chairperson advised Members that at last week's meeting Members made reference to research on HIA and Redress in the Republic of Ireland. The most recent RaISe briefing paper on HIA and Redress in the Republic of Ireland was presented to the Committee at its meeting on the 20 November 2024. This was then circulated to Members again via email on Monday 7 April 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an addition to the original briefing to include information on the institutions subject to the Inquiry and their contributions, as outlined in a final report submitted to the Minister for Equality in the Republic of Ireland.

5.2 Balmoral Show

The Chairperson advised Members that at last week's meeting the Committee considered correspondence from the Public Engagement Manager regarding attendance at the Balmoral Show.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the opportunities presented by the Balmoral Show are not a good fit for its current work programme at this time, but would consider attending future shows.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask what TEO, and other Departments, will be doing to promote the Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy at the Balmoral Show 2025 given it has been identified as a priority in the Programme for Government.

6. Inquiry: Consideration of recommendations – Inquiry into gaps in equality legislation (closed session)

Agreed: The Committee agreed to allow RaISe officials to sit and observe in the public gallery for the Inquiry session.

The oral evidence session began in closed session at 3.26pm.

The meeting moved into open session at 4.16pm.

Members discussed the way forward in terms of the Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to compile a draft report for Committee consideration in early May.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to discuss the possibility of retitling the Inquiry to most closely reflect the contents of the draft final report, and that it would revisit this at a future meeting.

7. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual in relation to a request to extend the HIA Redress Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to consider the correspondence further, if necessary, when the Committee is copied into the reply.

- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the analysis of 2024-2025 Outturn and Forecast Outturn.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to write to the Department to request further information on the breakdown of the £4.4 million in the February Outturn due to profiling of FTC repayment. The Committee also agreed to ask for further information on the profiling of Urban Villages capital grants.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities in relation to the Terms of Reference for civil servants entering into co-design.

Brian Kingston declared an interest as a Member of the Committee for Communities in relation this item of correspondence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to consider the correspondence further, if necessary, when the Committee is copied into the reply.

- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office regarding the Agriculture Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to write to the Agriculture Committee outlining that the provisions of the Bill have no direct impact on the functions of TEO.

- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to the Draft Refugee Integration Strategy and Delivery Framework.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to consider the Strategy further once the Department has updated the Committee following Executive approval and publication.

- vii. The Committee noted a Hansard Report from the Departmental Briefing on the Budget 2025-2026 from the meeting on the 26 March 2025.
- viii. The Committee noted a Hansard Report from the Departmental Briefing on Communities in Transition from the meeting on the 26 March 2025.
- ix. The Committee noted an activity report from the Investment Strategy Northern; Investing Activity Report 30 March 2025.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance sent by the Committee on the 11 March correspondence regarding Primacy on Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Report.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk regarding the rescheduling of the oral briefing from RaISe on their updated paper on legacy in the Republic of Ireland, which will now take place on 7 May instead of 14 May, to allow for an oral evidence session with Department officials and the President of the Victims' Payments Board on the Victims' Payment Scheme. The Committee will also hear

from Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) at this meeting also on the Victim's Payment Scheme.

The Committee also noted an update from the Assistant Clerk regarding an oral briefing with the Youth Assembly which will take place at its meeting on the 25 June, to discuss its findings on a recent survey on Young Women's Rights in Schools in relation to the Ending Violence against Women and Girls.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed with the remaining briefings as set out in the forward work programme.

9. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold its Strategic Planning session before its formal Committee meeting on the 30 April at 1.00pm. The Committee team will send a meeting request to Members.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to start its formal Committee meeting at 2.30pm on the 30 April after the Strategic Planning Session.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 April at 2.30pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.27pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 9 April 2025